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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,  
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON PRESIDENT BUSH IN IRAQ, TARGETED  
ASSASSINATIONS, AND GUANTANAMO SUICIDES

Editorial Commentary on President Bush in Iraq

-- "Bush's secret visit to Iraq"

Chief Editor Taher Odwan writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (06/15): "The sudden appearance of the American President in Baghdad reflects his need to invest Zargawi's killing to give the illusion that his country is achieving military victory. It is the commodity of selling illusions and dreams that Bush worked hard on since his wrong decision of occupying Iraq. The tale of military victory is similar to the lie of the weapons of mass destruction. While Bush was taking photos with the Iraqi Prime Minister, the Defense Ministry in Baghdad was announcing the killing of 263 Iraqi civilians, the injury of 301 others and 63 attacks during the past week. What victory is Bush talking about? The other sad thing about the tragic events in Iraq is that the terrorist and sectarian killing groups have withheld the many positive aspects of the Iraqi resistance against the occupation. In a new statement for Zargawi's successor, there was determination on dividing up the Iraqi people by enhancing sectarian struggle and murders.... With their sectarian approach, such people serve Bush's war in Iraq. In death too, they serve the American President by raising his popularity in his own country."

Editorial Commentary on Targeted Assassinations

-- "Israeli terrorism and international silence"

Chief Editor Ayman Safadi writes on the back-page of centrist, independent, Arabic daily Al-Ghad (06/15): "The western double standards in dealing with regional issues will continue to be a source of tension and fuel for the growing conflict between the Arabs and the western civilization. These double standards were very clear in the west's stand vis-à-vis the crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in the past few days.... A country that dedicates its army to the killing of innocent civilians. This is state terrorism that not even the most pro-Israeli voices can justify. Despite that, we do not see any western stand of any value speaking against Israeli terrorism.... It is inconceivable that the world punishes the Palestinian people because their government refuses to acknowledge Israel in words while it does not nothing against Israel that is destroying the Palestinian people in actuality. America and Europe and those behind say they want to achieve peace in the Middle East.... It is time for America and the European countries to translate their words into real action if they want to have any credibility in the region."

It cannot be that hell is raised against any Arab or Palestinian action that does not please the west or Israel, but complete silence prevails when it comes to Israeli policies and crimes that are more destructive and dangerous to the quest for comprehensive and just peace in the region. America and other western countries have no right to ask, after all their biased stands in favor of Israel and crime-overlooking positions, why so many Arabs see their policies as antagonistic and as having no other purpose but to serve their own interests and those of Israel at the expense of the legitimate Arab rights."

#### Editorial Commentary on Guantanamo Suicides

-- "War crimes in Guantanamo"

Columnist Manar Rashwani writes on the op-ed page of centrist, independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (06/15): "Can President Bush's reaction to the crime, which was represented by his expression of 'deep concern', be considered an implicit acknowledgement of responsibility? Or is the President's concern the result of diminishing numbers of the prisoners which would threaten the terrifying image that they are trying to portray to give lessons to all those who go against the United States? Because the accused is innocent until proven guilty in a fair trial, then every act leading to the killing or torture before that of any prisoner in Guantanamo is, according to Geneva Convention, a war crime perpetrated by the United States against innocent people. But is there any one who can curb the U.S. administration or convince it to stop its terrorism that feeds all other forms of terrorism?"

RUBINSTEIN